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Frequent shootings put U.S. mass killings on a record pace

By STEFANIE DAZIO and
LARRY FENN

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The U.S. is setting a record pace for mass killings in 2023, replaying the horror on a loop roughly once a week so far this year. The carnage has taken 88 lives in 17 mass killings over 111 days. Each time, the killers wielded firearms. Only 2009 was marked by as many such tragedies in the same period of time. Children at a Nashville grade school, gunned down on an ordinary Monday. Farmworkers in Northern California, sprayed with bullets over a workplace grudge. Dancers at a ballroom outside Los Angeles, massacred as they celebrated the Lunar New Year. In just the last week, four partygoers were slain and 32 injured in Dadeville, Alabama, when bullets rained down on a Sweet 16 celebration.



Students at a nearby school pay respects at a memorial for the people who were killed, at an entry to Covenant School, Tuesday, March 28, 2023, in Nashville, Tenn.

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Associated Press

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Frequent shootings put U.S. mass killings on a record pace

Continued from Front

And a man just released from prison fatally shot four people, including his parents, in Bowdoin, Maine, before opening fire on motorists traveling a busy interstate highway.

"Nobody should be shocked," said Fred Guttenberg, whose 14-year-old daughter Jaime was one of 17 people killed at a Parkland, Florida, high school in 2018. "I visit my daughter in a cemetery. Outrage doesn't begin to describe how I feel."

The Parkland victims are among the 2,842 people who have died in mass killings in the U.S. since 2006, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today, in partnership with Northeastern University. It counts killings involving four or more fatalities, not including the perpetrator, the same standard as the FBI, and tracks a number of variables for each.

The bloodshed represents just a fraction of the fatal violence that occurs in the U.S. annually. Yet mass killings are happening with staggering frequency this year: An average of once every 6.53 days, according to an analysis of The AP/USA Today data.

The 2023 numbers stand out even more when they are compared to the tally for full-year totals since data was collected. The U.S. re-

corded 30 or fewer mass killings in more than half of the years in the database, so to be at 17 less than a third of the way through is remarkable.



Elyane Stefanick holds her daughter Amara, 7, at a growing memorial for victims of Monday's mass shooting in Half Moon Bay, Calif., on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023.

Associated Press

From coast to coast, the violence is sparked by a range of motives. Murder-suicides and domestic violence; gang retaliation; school shootings and workplace vendettas. All have taken the lives of four or more people at once since Jan. 1. Yet the violence continues and barriers to change remain. The likelihood of Congress reinstating a ban on semi-automatic rifles appears far off, and the U.S. Supreme Court last year set new standards for reviewing the nation's gun laws, calling into question firearms restrictions across the country.

The pace of mass shoot-

ings so far this year doesn't necessarily foretell a new annual record. In 2009, the bloodshed slowed and the year finished with a final count of 32 mass killings

and 172 fatalities. Those figures just barely exceed the averages of 31.1 mass killings and 162 victims a year, according to an analysis of data dating back to 2006. Gruesome records have been set within the last decade. The data shows a high of 45 mass killings in 2019 and 230 people slain in such tragedies in 2017. That year, 60 people died when a gunman opened fire over an outdoor country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip. The massacre still accounts for the most fatalities from a mass shooting in modern America.

"Here's the reality: If somebody is determined to

commit mass violence, they're going to," said Jaclyn Schildkraut, executive director of the Rockefeller Institute of Government's Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium. "And it's our role as society to try and put up obstacles and barriers to make that more difficult."

But there's little indication at either the state or federal level — with a handful of exceptions — that many major policy changes are on the horizon.

Some states have tried to impose more gun control within their own borders. Last week, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed a new law mandating criminal background checks to purchase rifles and shotguns, whereas the state previously required them only for people buying pistols. And on Wednesday, a ban on dozens of types of semi-automatic rifles cleared the Washington state Legislature and is headed to the governor's desk. Other states are experiencing a new round of pressure. In conservative Tennessee, protesters descended on the state Capitol to demand more gun regulation after six people were killed at the Nashville private elementary school last month.

At the federal level, President Joe Biden last year signed a milestone gun violence bill, toughening background checks for

the youngest gun buyers, keeping firearms from more domestic violence offenders and helping states use red flag laws that enable police to ask courts to take guns from people who show signs they could turn violent.

Despite the blaring headlines, mass killings are statistically rare, perpetrated by just a handful of people each year in a country of nearly 335 million. And there's no way to predict whether this year's events will continue at this rate.

Sometimes mass killings happen back-to-back — like in January, when deadly events in northern and southern California occurred just two days apart — while other months pass without bloodshed.

"We shouldn't necessarily expect that this — one mass killing every less than seven days — will continue," said Northeastern University criminologist James Alan Fox, who oversees the database. "Hopefully it won't." Still, experts and advocates decry the proliferation of guns in the U.S. in recent years, including record sales during the height of the pandemic.

"We have to know that this isn't the way to live," said John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety. "We don't have to live this way. And we cannot live in a country with an agenda of guns everywhere, every place and every time." □



Chairman Hansjörg Wyss speaks during a press conference of Swiss medical devices maker Synthes Inc, in Oberdorf, Switzerland, Feb. 18, 2009.

Associated Press

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI
Associated Press

A fund controlled by a Swiss billionaire who has steered tens of millions of dollars to liberal causes also donated

as much as \$50,000 to the nonpartisan group Common Cause to advocate for a federal ban on donations like his.

David Vance, a spokes-

Swiss billionaire's fund helped push against 'dark money'

man for Common Cause, which advocates for limiting big money in politics, confirmed that the group received a donation from the Berger Action Fund, founded by Hansjörg Wyss. The fund has enabled Wyss, who lives in Wyoming but remains a Swiss citizen, to donate enormous amounts of money to liberal causes without running afoul of the United States' ban on foreign citizens contributing to political campaigns.

Vance said the donation last year was between \$25,000 and \$50,000, adding that Common Cause normally reports the range of donations rather than precise dollar amounts. That's a small fraction of the nearly \$28 million in grants Common Cause reported receiving in 2022.

The grant also pales in comparison to Berger's overall contributions, which amounted to about \$72 million in 2021, cementing

Wyss' status as a Democratic megadonor.

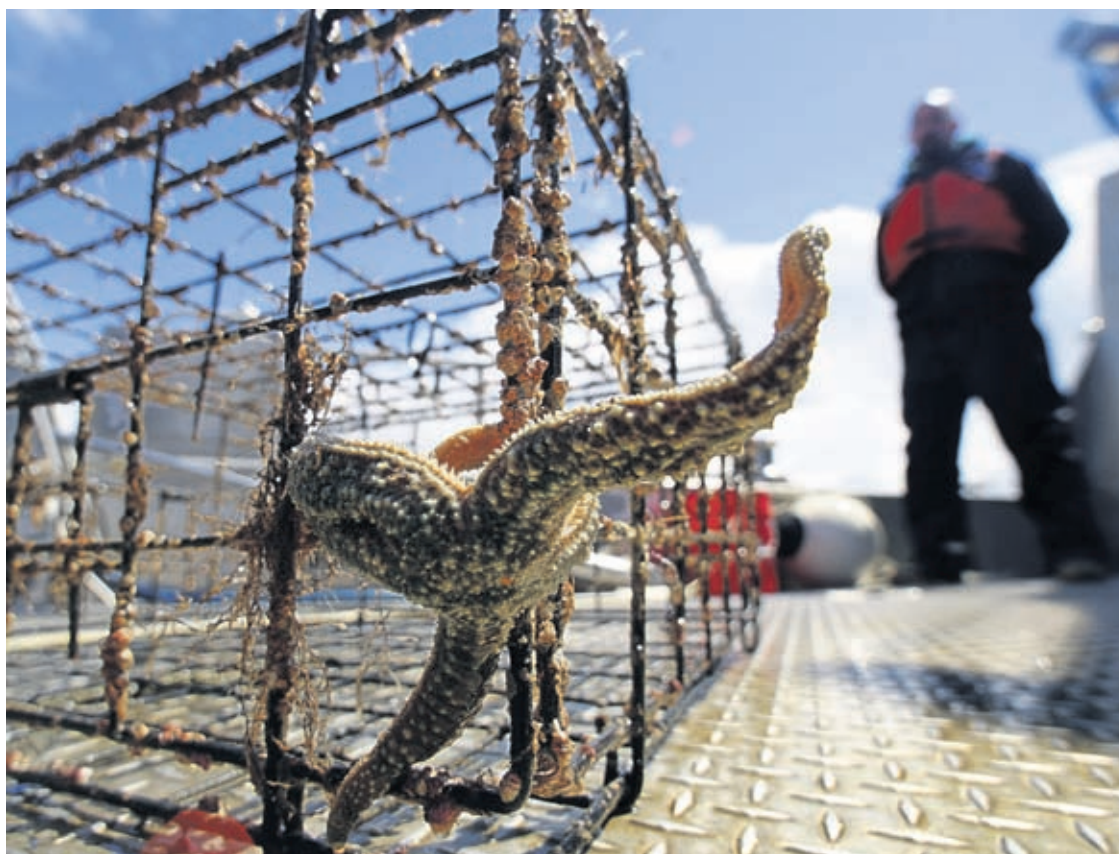
The Berger Action Fund says on its website that the Common Cause donation was to support the DISCLOSE Act. The federal legislation would place new regulations on "dark money" to political non-profit groups, which are not required to disclose their donors and do not have to reveal much about how they spend the donations they receive. □

New federal program targets abandoned crab, lobster traps

By **BEN FINLEY**

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — The U.S. government is launching a new program to combat the scourge of abandoned crab and lobster traps, which can dilute harvests and kill other fish in coastal waters from Maine to Alaska. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has chosen William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science to anchor the program. The university announced Friday that NOAA is providing an \$8 million grant to the institute to implement the project. Abandoned fishing gear is a worldwide problem that's been referred to as anything from "ghost nets" to the "land mines of the sea." The lost equipment is often dislodged by storms or passing boats, but it still will attract and kill marine life. Industry experts and scientists estimate commercial fishermen lose about 10% of their traps per year to bad weather, strong currents and vessels that sever tie lines. A 2001 study suggested that



A starfish reaches out from one of the recovered crab pots pulled up from the muddy bottom of Tulalip Bay on May 3, 2011 in Everett, Wash.

Associated Press

ghost fishing kills 4 million to 10 million blue crabs each year in Louisiana alone. The NOAA's new program will fund efforts to remove derelict traps used to harvest blue, Dungeness and stone crabs as well as the American and spiny species of

lobsters. The program will collect nationwide data on where the lost traps are found and the types of marine life that is impacted. The information will be used to help inform efforts throughout U.S. coastal waters, said Kirk Havens,

who directs the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. "Just removing 10% of the traps from a hotspot area, you can increase a harvest significantly," he said. Removal also helps pre-

serve marine life. In the Chesapeake Bay alone, some 40 species have been caught in derelict blue crab traps, from rock fish and flounder to diving ducks, Havens said. NOAA's new effort is the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program, with TRAP standing for Trap Removal, Assessment & Prevention. Havens said the institute will launch a national competition to fund removal endeavors across the U.S. Coastal states have been battling the problem for decades. For example, experts estimated in 2014 that more than 12,000 crab pots were being lost in Washington state's Puget Sound every year, costing an estimated \$700,000 in lost harvest revenue as well as damaging the sea floor environment. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science has worked with the state of Virginia and local watermen to remove tens of thousands of derelict crab pots. A 2016 study by the institute found that a 6-year removal program generated more than \$20 million in harvest value. □

Biden signs order prioritizing 'environmental justice'

By **JOSH BOAK and DREW COSTLEY**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday signed an executive order that would create the White House Office of Environmental Justice. The White House said it wants to ensure that poverty, race and ethnic status do not lead to worse exposure to pollution and environmental harm. Biden tried to draw a contrast between his agenda and that of Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. GOP lawmakers have called for less regulation of oil production to lower energy prices, while the Biden administration says the GOP policies would give benefits to highly profitable oil companies and surren-

der the renewable energy sector to the Chinese. "Environmental justice will be the mission of the entire government woven directly into how we work with state, local, tribal and territorial governments," Biden said in remarks at the White House. The order tells executive branch agencies to use data and scientific research to understand how pollution hurts people's health, so that work can be done to limit any damage. Under the order, executive agencies would be required to inform nearby communities if toxic substances were released from a federal facility. As part of the announcement, Vice President Kamala Harris is separately traveling to Miami, Florida,

to announce \$562 million to help protect communities against the impacts of climate change. The EPA last year formed its own Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, merging three existing EPA programs to oversee a portion of Democrats' \$60 billion investment in environmental justice initiatives created by last year's Inflation Reduction Act. The order puts more pressure on federal agencies and the White House itself to deliver on promises the Biden administration has made to clean up the environment in communities of color and poor communities and prepare them for the effects of climate change. The administration has had mixed results in fulfilling this

promise. There has been unprecedented spending on environmental and climate justice issues. But there have also been disagreements over how to gauge which communi-

ties are most in need of the funding and the administration's greenlighting of controversial drilling projects as Republicans have criticized Biden for high gasoline prices. □



President Joe Biden signs an executive order that would create the White House Office of Environmental Justice in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, Friday, April 21, 2023.

Associated Press

Mississippi OKs more state policing in mostly Black city

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi's Republican governor signed a bill on Friday to expand the territory of a state-run police department inside the majority-Black capital city of Jackson, and the new law is expected to face a court challenge from the NAACP. The legislation was passed by a majority-white and Republican-controlled state House and Senate. Jackson is governed by Democrats and about 83% of residents are Black, the largest percentage of any major U.S. city.

NAACP national president Derrick Johnson, who lives in Jackson, said the law would treat Black people as "second-class citizens" by stomping on rights of local self-government. He said at a community meeting on April 6 in Jackson that the NAACP intends to sue the state.

"They're only imposing this on the city of Jackson," Johnson said. "No other jurisdiction in the state of Mis-



Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves speaks at a news conference, Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at a state office building in Jackson, Miss.

Associated Press

issippi will have this type of oversight and taking of local authority. That is a direct violation of equal protection."

Gov. Tate Reeves said this week that the Jackson Police Department is severely understaffed and he believes the state-run Capitol Police can provide stability.

The city has nearly 150,000 residents and has had more than 100 homicides in each of the past three years.

"We have a crippling problem with violent crime in our capital city," Reeves said in a statement Friday. "We're working to address it. And when we do, we're met with overwhelming

false cries of racism and mainstream media who falsely call our actions 'Jim Crow.'" Capitol Police officers have been patrolling around state government buildings in and near downtown, and the Jackson Police Department patrols the entire city. Critics say Capitol Police are aggressive,

and expanding the territory could endanger lives.

Debate in the past four months over a larger state role in Jackson has angered residents who don't want their voices diminished in local government. It's the latest example of the long-running tensions between the state government and the capital city.

The law will create a temporary court within a Capitol Complex Improvement District inside a portion of Jackson. The court will have the same power as municipal courts, which handle misdemeanor cases, traffic violations and initial appearances for some criminal charges.

Most municipal judges are appointed by city officials. Jackson has a Black mayor and majority-Black city council.

The judge of the new court is not required to live in Jackson and will be appointed by the Mississippi Supreme Court chief justice. The current chief justice is a conservative white man. □

California to meet 100% of water requests thanks to storms

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— California will provide 100% of the water requested by cities and farms for the first time in years thanks to winter storms that filled reservoirs and runoff from a record snowpack, regulators announced Thursday. The State Water Project will provide full allocations to 29 water agencies supplying about 27 million customers and 750,000 acres of farmland, the Department of Water Resources said.

As late as March, the agency was only expecting to provide 75% of requested water supplies.

The last time the state agency fully met water requests was in 2006.

Meanwhile, the federal Bureau of Reclamation announced it was increasing water allocations for the Central Valley Project to 100% for the first time since 2017.

The move was cheered by



The Oroville Dam, top right, holds back water at Lake Oroville on March 25, 2023, in Butte County, Calif.

Associated Press

contractors who supply the federal water to the state's agricultural heartland. It will provide much-needed water to communities, farms and families in the San Joaquin Valley, said a statement from Jose Gutierrez, interim general manager of Westlands Water District.

"Following two years of 0% allocations, this water supply will assist growers in Westlands with putting the land to work to grow the

food that feeds the world," he said.

Both the state and federal governments control networks of reservoirs and canals that supply water across California.

Three years of drought had pinched off supplies drastically in the nation's most populous state. Late last year, nearly all of California was in drought, including at extreme and exceptional levels. Wells ran dry, farmers

fallowed fields, and cities restricted watering grass.

The water picture changed dramatically starting in December, when the first of a dozen "atmospheric rivers" hit, causing widespread flooding and damaging homes and infrastructure, and dumping as many as 700 inches (17.8 meters) of snow in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

The statewide reservoir storage on Thursday was at 105% of the average for the date, the Department of Water Resources said.

The runoff from the melting snow will supply additional water that the state agency said it is working to capture.

As of this week, more than 65% of California no longer had drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

However, the Department of Water Resources urged people to continue using

water cautiously. State officials have warned that in the era of climate change, one extremely wet year could be followed by several dry years, returning the state to drought.

The state water agency noted that some northern areas of the state still have water supply issues. In addition, some areas, including the agricultural Central Valley, are still recovering after years of pumping that has depleted underground water.

"Millions of Californians rely on groundwater supplies as a sole source of water," the agency warned.

"The Colorado River Basin, which is a critical water supply source for Southern California, is still in the midst of a 23-year drought," the agency added. "Californians should continue to use water wisely to help the state adapt to a hotter, drier future." □

China FM: Taiwan, foreign supporters 'playing with fire'

BEIJING (AP) — China's foreign minister warned Taiwan and its supporters on Friday that they are "playing with fire" if they go against Beijing's demand to exert control over the self-governing island democracy. Qin Gang's remarks came at the end of a speech espousing China's contribution to the global economy and the interests of developing nations, in which he repeatedly praised Communist Party Secretary General Xi Jinping's Global Security Initiative. The concept is the latest of China's moves to position its single-party political system, with its claim to social stability and economic growth, as an alternative to the Western liberal approach that largely defines international relations. Toward the end of his speech in the financial hub of Shanghai, Qin turned to what China calls the "Taiwan problem."

While China has taken a consistently hard-line position on Taiwan, it has usually delegated threatening statements to spokespeople or lower-lever diplomats speaking through news releases or in bilateral settings. Qin answers directly



Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang speaks during the forum titled Chinese Modernization and the World held at The Grand Halls in Shanghai, Friday, April 21, 2023.

to the Politburo Standing Committee of the ruling Communist Party led by deeply nationalistic leader Xi, and his comments Friday reflected a harsher tone of Chinese language over the possibility of a military clash over Taiwan.

As a former chief spokesperson at the Foreign Ministry, Qin was a forerunner in taking Xi's more confrontational approach toward relations with the United States, its Asian allies and

Western democracies. Countries from South Korea to Germany have recently spoken out against China's threats against Taiwan, underscoring a war of words that teeters on the edge of outright conflict with recent Chinese military exercises surrounding Taiwan and the strengthening of U.S. alliances in Asia aimed at responding to Beijing's increased military presence. The threat level toward Taiwan is difficult to rank, but

U.S. officials have said China intends to be prepared to launch an invasion within the next decade. Qin's comments, while not unprecedented, gave higher visibility to the Chinese threats in front of an international audience of the type China has sought to recruit as partners in business and development. "The safeguarding of national sovereignty and territorial integrity is beyond reproach," Qin said.

"The Taiwan problem is at the core of China's core interests," he said. "We will never back down in the face of any act that undermines China's sovereignty and security. Those who play with fire on the question of Taiwan will burn themselves." Such remarks are typically directed at the island's democratically elected government under President Tsai Ing-wen and its most important ally, the United States. China considers Taiwan a part of its territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

Earlier in April, China held large-scale air and sea drills in the areas surrounding Taiwan in retaliation for Tsai's meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on April 5 in California. China said the exercises simulating an encirclement of Taiwan were intended as a "serious warning" to pro-independence politicians on the self-governing island and their foreign supporters.

China has stepped up its military pressure and diplomatic isolation against Taiwan in recent years, sending fighter jets and navy vessels towards the island on a near-daily basis. □

Associated Press

Argentina's President Fernández won't seek reelection

By DANIEL POLITI

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — Argentina's President Alberto Fernández announced Friday he won't seek reelection for a second term this year, a decision that follows months of infighting among the ruling coalition as it grapples with a fragile economy and galloping inflation.

The center-left president's unexpected announcement, which he made through a video posted on social media titled "my decision," came as he was faced increasing pressure from coalition members not to run and polls showing declining approval ratings. The decision immediately

shook up Argentina's political landscape months away from August primaries and the October presidential election.

During the seven-and-a-half-minute video, Fernández never actually said he won't be running for president, but he made that intention clear by saying that on Dec. 10 he would be handing over the presidential sash to whoever is elected, adding that he will "fervently work so that it is a partner from our political space."

Fernández acknowledged that "it is clear we did not achieve everything we set out to do" during his administration and said he

now wants to "focus my effort, my commitment, and my heart on solving the problems of Argentines."

Internal disputes in the ruling coalition have burst out into the open, and for months now allies of Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner have been calling on Fernández to not seek reelection so they can better design an electoral strategy ahead of the primaries.

Fernández has suffered a plunge in opinion ratings as Argentina has been stuck in economic doldrums for years, with more than 50 percent of children living in poverty and a galloping annual inflation rate of



Argentine President Alberto Fernandez waves as he arrives to the opening session of Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

Associated Press

more than 100 percent. Around seven-in-10 Argentines see Fernández in a negative light, according to a March poll by Giacobbe & Asociados, a local consultancy. Only 10% have a positive image of the president, according to

the survey. The president's decision not to seek reelection comes at the end of a week in which the local currency has suffered a sharp depreciation in the financial markets and sovereign bond prices have plunged. □

Russia's air force accidentally bombs own city of Belgorod

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's military acknowledged that a bomb accidentally dropped by one of its warplanes caused a powerful blast in a Russian city not far from Ukraine's border, injuring two and scaring local residents.

Belgorod, a city of 340,000 located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the Russia-Ukraine border, has faced regular drone attacks during Russia's current military operation in Ukraine. Russian authorities blamed the earlier strikes on the Ukrainian military, which refrained from directly claiming responsibility for the attacks.

The explosion late Thursday was far more powerful than anything Belgorod residents had experienced before. Witnesses reported a low hissing sound followed by a blast that made nearby apartment buildings tremble and shattered their windows.

It left a 20-meter (66-foot)-wide crater in the middle of a tree-lined avenue flanked by apartment blocks, damaged several cars and threw one vehicle onto a store roof. Two



This handout photo released by Telegram Channel of Belgorod Region Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov shows the site of the crater after an explosion in Belgorod, Russia, Friday, April 21, 2023. Associated Press

people were injured, and a third person was later hospitalized with hypertension, authorities said.

Immediately after the explosion, Russian commentators and military bloggers were abuzz with theories about what weapon Ukraine had used for the attack. Many of them called for strong retribution.

But about an hour later, the Russian Defense Minis-

try acknowledged that a weapon accidentally released by one of its own Su-34 bombers caused the blast. The ministry did not provide any further details, but military experts said the weapon likely was a powerful 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) bomb.

Military experts charged that the weapon appeared to have been set to explode with a small de-

lay after impact that would allow it to hit underground facilities.

Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said local authorities decided to temporarily resettle residents of a nine-story apartment building while it was inspected to make sure it hadn't suffered structural damage that rendered it unsafe to live in.

In an editorial gaffe, an an-

chor on Russian state television followed the news about the local authorities dealing with the explosion's aftermath by declaring that "modern weapons allow Russian units to eliminate extremists in the area of the special military operation from a minimal distance." The anchor looked visibly puzzled by the text that he had just read.

Russian commentators questioned why the warplane flew over Belgorod and urged the military to avoid such risky overflights in the future.

Some alleged that the bomb that was accidentally dropped on Belgorod could be one of a batch of modified munitions equipped with wings and GPS-guided targeting system that allows them to glide to targets dozens of kilometers (miles) away. The Russian air force has started using such gliding bombs only recently, and some experts say that they could be prone to glitches. In October, a Russian warplane crashed next to a residential building in the port city of Yeysk on the Sea of Azov, killing 15 people. □

Burkina Faso investigates alleged abuses by security forces

By **SAM MEDNICK**
Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Burkina Faso's government has opened investigations into allegations of human rights abuses by its secu-

rity forces after a video surfaced that appeared to show the extrajudicial killing of seven children in the country's north.

"The conclusions of the said investigations will lead, if

the facts are established, to legal proceedings against the persons responsible for these acts," government spokesperson Jean-Emmanuel Ouedraogo said in a statement issued Thursday. "There will be no impunity for the proven perpetrators of human rights violations in Burkina Faso." The announcement was in response to calls from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate the video, which circulated on chat groups starting in mid-February.

The Associated Press this month published its own findings about the video. AP's investigation determined that Burkina Faso's security forces killed the children in a military base outside the town of Oua-

higouya. Relatives of one of the boys, 16-year-old Adama, said he had come from feeding cows when security forces detained and later killed him.

Jihadi fighters linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have waged a violent insurgency in Burkina Faso for seven years. The violence has killed thousands of people, displaced some 2 million, and destabilized and divided the once peaceful country, leading to two coups last year.

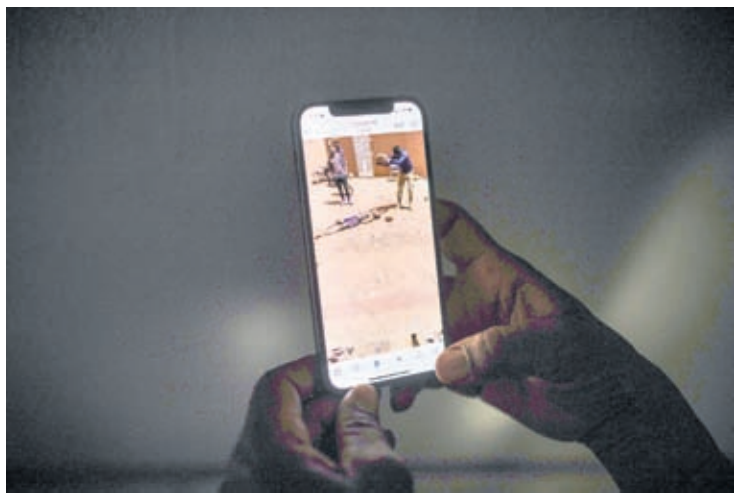
Since Capt. Ibrahim Traore seized power in September during the second coup, extrajudicial killings of civilians have increased and civic freedoms have shrunk, according to rights groups and residents.

The government's pledge

to bring perpetrators to justice marked a stark shift from its initial response to the killings captured in the video.

At the time of the AP investigation's publication, authorities said Burkina Faso's security forces were not involved and that jihadis often disguise themselves as military personnel and film killings in order to blame the government.

The government also cracked down on journalists days after French newspaper Liberation published its own story about the killings. Liberation correspondent Agnes Faivre and Sophie Douce, a French correspondent for French newspaper Le Monde, were expelled and given 24 hours to leave the country with no explanation. □



The uncle of a 16-year-old named Adama watches a video in Burkina Faso, on March 18, 2023, showing a man slamming a rock onto the head of his nephew.

Associated Press

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Students from John Wesley High School send letter to the minister regarding permanent school closure



(Oranjestad)—Students from John Wesley High School in San Nicolas are addressing in their letter their concern about a possible permanent closure of the school and are urging Minister Endy Croes (Education) to please discuss this matter with them first before taking a final decision.

"We are members of the student council 'Student Making a Difference' (SMAD). We started this student council this year to be able to use our voice when it comes to our education. The reason we are sending this letter was to share our point of view on why the school should stay open. Our problem with this is that we feel comfortable at our school and are finally adapting to a new path. The biggest reason why we think the school should not close down is because we have amazing teachers who are always there for you no matter what. They really go the extra mile, even staying after school to give us extra lessons. We are upset that no one brought this closure to our attention; we also have our rights. We as SMAD have taken the students' concern in consideration. Minister Croes can further read all our concerns below," the document stated. They have expressed that their small school is a team, a family. They have created several social media account to bring in more students, seeing as though the yearly tuition is very high (650 to 700 florins a year) and not every parent has the means to pay this sum.

This school was founded 63 years ago in San Nicolas and now houses a total of 62 students. "The love and dedication we get from the teacher is just what we need, because some of us don't get this at home. That's why for many

of us, this school is not just a school. It's a home," some students have expressed.

They also do not agree with a possibility of a name change. They are asking the Ministry of Education to keep the school open so they can stay together: "We are willing to do whatever it takes, just like we are doing already to keep our school open. Put us under the DPS registry but please don't change our teachers. They have a vision for this school and for the students. It's upsetting to see them taking something away from San Nicolas once again. Why is it that Oranjestad always gets the best attention and care?" the student representative pointed out in the letter.

This past week, our reporter found out through a source that students had to rectify this letter, because the Ministry did not find their letter appropriate. For this reason, they had to make a new letter.

They have also informed, along with the teachers, that they have planned different activities for the school, like Orientation Day, Job Fair and Tag-a-longs, but these have all been canceled. "SPCOA just decided this themselves," according to the students.

On social media platforms, they have explained their situation to the school's followers. Yesterday afternoon, the ministry held a meeting with the parents of these students, but the students themselves were not allowed to attend. According to the source, the reason why the students weren't invited was because the ministry thought that these discussions can incite disruptions during the meeting.

The source also claimed that since last year, the school has undergone a change in management and things are starting to change, but since 2017, the number of students has been declining. Because of this decline, the budget for upkeep is not enough. If this is true, why has the ministry not done anything to prevent further decline? Besides this, parents have nothing to do with what was happening in 2017.

Our reporter has also gotten in contact with the minister of education, Mr. Endy Croes, to receive more information on this awkward situation the schools is currently experiencing. What is going to happen to the teacher, will they still get paid? What is going to happen to the



students? Why is the ministry closing down the school, if that is the case.

One possible solution brought forth was to adapt the school to a three-year trajectory and see how that goes. All this is up to Minister Croes. So far, we have not received a response from the Minister. □

Remember Amuse Bistro?...

They're back with a new concept; The Journey



Known for their successful and top-notch establishments Amuse Bistro and Amuse Sunset, Chef Patrick van der Donk and his wife Yvette, who is a certified sommelier, are back with their latest gastronomic adventure that is now to be found at The Journey, beside the famous red windmill (De Olde Moulin) just off Eagle Beach, and will surely bring a brand new concept to take you on a culinary journey you will never forget.

A family of 5, Chef Patrick, his wife Yvette and their 8 year old triplet sons, started their trajectory about a decade ago, with the renowned and loved Amuse Bistro that saw immense success. Due to a tragic incident in which the restaurant burned down, they gathered all their strength and continued their success at a new location behind the airport, as a brand new beginning named Amuse Sunset until they saw it come to an end. After overcoming unforeseen circumstances like the pandemic, the family is stronger than ever and reading to begin a new adventure and welcome you aboard.



The Journey offers a brand new, elegant and chic concept. Taking the table in 'Chef's Table' to heart, this new interpretation of 'chef's table' features stand-alone tables which seat only 20 patrons, all who must arrive before 7pm. Once you choose to embark on this adventure, the night will start once you arrived at your destination, right next to the mill in Palm Beach, where you will be welcomed with a toast of bubbles (on the house) on the terrace while you wait for

the beginning of an unforgettable night. Once the clock hits 7pm, you will be taken into the restaurant for a magical five-course Chef's choice pre-fixed menu that will take your taste buds on a high class world tour.

You can opt to pair your courses with the sommelier's expertly curated choice of fine wines by the glass or order a bottle from their impressive wine list. With an open kitchen concept, you get to witness the chef bring his inspiration and creations to life. By the end of the night, you are guaranteed to have made a few new friends with whom you've enjoyed a wonderful experience of culinary bliss.

The Journey is open from Mon-Fri and is reservation only, we ask that all guests with a reservation arrive before 7pm. For further questions or information, refer to their website <https://the-journeyaruba.com/> or contact Yvette at +297 565 0535

Make your reservation today and have a 'Bon Voyage!' ☐



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. Presenting the Ambassadors with the Emerald certification as a token of appreciation. The honoring certification program is granted to ambassadors, to recognize, the loyalty, friendships, and visits to Aruba.

For consecutively choosing Aruba as their preferred vacation destination each year. The Honoring certification program has three levels, which are divided according to the number of consecutive years visiting the island of Aruba.

Honoring Levels:

- Distinguished Ambassadors: 10> years
- Goodwill Ambassadors: 20> years
- Emerald Ambassadors: 35> years

Honoree were:

Emerald Ambassadors 35> years:

Thomas & Jeanette Sypek residents of Massachusetts, United States (have been visiting Aruba for 36 years consecutively).

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort bestowed the certification of the Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were presented with the official certificate, and with memorable gifts.

On behalf of the Government of Aruba, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all the Ambassadors for making Aruba their preferred vacation destination for so many years. We are so thankful to have had such wonderful Ambassadors as our visitors after all these years! Aruba is unquestionably their home away from home!

According to Honorees these are the top reasons for returning to Aruba:

Mr. Thomas & Mrs. Jeanette Sypek reasons:

1. Guaranteed guest vacation
2. Best piña coladas on the island – Dutch Village Tiki Bar
3. Sun/ beaches
4. Great restaurants
5. Friendly locals- One Happy Island! ☐



**Beauty
& THE
BEACH**

Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out to **Larry and Loredana from Toronto, Canada**. They came to Aruba for the warm weather. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!

This segment is sponsored by Alhambra Casino and Shops.

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Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be

found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment. Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.



Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Co-secha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer.□



How filters on social media can affect mental health

(Oranjestad)—For many years now, technology has been an indispensable part of the day-to-day life of people. Most of the global population use electronic devices for work, their study, for entertainment purposes and especially for communicating with others.

Nowadays, the majority of young children between ages 11 and 18 have mobile devices with access to the internet. Online interactions is something very important those who interact and create relationships with other people through online profiles.

The latest data from Unicef indicates that 98% of all teenagers have at least one profile account on social media platforms. While 83% have three profiles or more, two in three have more than one online profile that they to specifically interact with friends and family.

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok have incorporated the option of editing pictures and videos using filter before uploading them to the web. One recently viral filter included the option to make facial properties "more attractive" and hide features which are deemed socially as "less attractive."

Filter on social media are described as a set of digital elements that create an augmented version of reality which allows the integration of virtual content in the real world.

The use of these digital tools is applied on pictures to make faces or bodies "prettier." However, mental health experts warn that frequent use of filter may lead to someone developing a unhealthy obsession with presenting the "perfect" appearance.

On Instagram, for example, there are filter that can be applied to pictures or reels when a user upload content on their story. Similarly, TikTok offers editing tools for the users' content, ranging



from sounds effects, color changes, voice change etc.

According to a study on the social media managing platform "Hootsuite", there are 500 million existing accounts on Instagram around the world; 75% of this amount use filters to digitally modify their reality. Clinical psychologists have pointed out that "the filters are harmless if used sparingly and for fun. This be-

comes a problem when the user starts depending on these filters to be able to present themselves to others online. There is a lack of confidence and self-esteem there."

They have also mentioned that the frequent use of filters can be especially damaging to children and teenagers who are consistently exposed to enhance appearances online. This can lead to frustration, dissat-

isfaction for ones appearance and even depression due to the direct impact on one's self-esteem.

The unrealistic expectations that social media imposes on users can create low self-esteem and may cause users to strive for the idea of "perfection". This can lead to further frustration is users and not satisfied, anxiety and symptoms of depression. Recent studies show that these types

of mental disorders have increased by 70% among teenagers and nine out of ten teenagers do not feel confidence in themselves nor their physical appearance.

In this sense, the use of filter to alter one's image on social media contributes directly to the unrealistic expectations of what is "the perfect body,"

In 2020, a study conducted by the University of California identified an existing correlation between the use of filters and the desire to modify and augment one's body or appearance. Results of the study also showed the consequences of body dysmorphia, which is an obsessive tendency in which a person is consistently worried and unsatisfied by their physical appearance. In cases like these, even the smallest detail can cause extreme anxiety, despite that these may not even be noticed by anyone else.

Faced with this reality that causes mental health issues and unrealistic standards, the first thing to ask is: What can we do to prevent these things from happening? The first step is to be aware of the effects of social media.

This is why it is crucial for parents to communicate with their children about the pros and cons of social media, preferably before allowing them to gain access to the internet. Be aware of what your child is doing online and what content they are exposed to.

It is also important to not judge, so that children and teenagers can feel understood and feel like they are not alone. Parents can also explain the consequences of social media and how these can create unrealistic ideals in their children's mind. Encourage them to take up hobbies and allow themselves time to interact and spend time outside of the internet. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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12 Flaring
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14 Marina
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15 Provinces

16 News
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18 Take turns
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26 TV warrior

27 Genesis

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36 "The
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Yesterday's answer

9 Ace, e.g.

10 Passed
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25 Comfort

28 Relish

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31 Public

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34 Foal's

36 Yoga

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4-22

A XYDI B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-22 CRYPTOQUOTE

X L P I Y L D P E X L D H Y ' K M D Y H N

U D C C D R P I Y A V D F V C D

Q P E Y H N E D P C C U C F Z R C U

P I K D . — C D A C Y D T H F V D .

"V P E T A P H R E D Q E D P I Y F H"

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF WE CHOOSE, WE CAN LIVE IN A WORLD OF COMFORTING ILLUSION. — NOAM CHOMSKY

Millennial Money: Young adults traveling on fiscal thin ice

By SAM KEMMIS
of NerdWallet

Prices for travel remain stubbornly high. The cost of airfare in February was 27% higher than the same month a year earlier, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. And rental car prices having shot up during the pandemic remain high today, as they're 37% pricier in February than they were in the same month in 2019.

Yet costlier travel is not deterring younger Americans who are eager to hit the road (and the skies) this year. A whopping 87% of 18-to-29-year-olds and 90% of 30-to-44-year-olds intend to travel this summer, according to a March survey by The Vacationer. If the economy is slowing, younger travelers aren't heeding the memo.

"When I meet with folks, they're not budgeting," says Dylan Snowden, a financial coach. "Most will just think about hotels and flight, but not the fact that they need to feed themselves three times a day." Ignoring the broader economic trends (like the rising cost of eating out) could mean stormy financial waters ahead for these vacationers. On top of inflation, savings are down, debt is up and the economy could be headed for a recession. Add the potential for student loan payments restarting this year, and a dire picture begins to emerge for those under 40. Could this be the year that pandemic-related "revenge travel" turns into "regret travel"?

BALLOONING DEBT

As savings that built up dur-



A traveler pulls their luggage between terminals at Logan International Airport, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

ing the pandemic begin to dwindle, vacationers facing high travel costs have two choices: cut costs or turn to debt. And it seems that younger Americans are opting for the latter.

Generation Z accrued 6% more credit card debt between the first and second halves of 2022, according to a January 2023 report from Credit Karma, while millennials racked up 5% more. Baby boomers added only 2% more credit card debt over the same period. "Since people don't budget, they underestimate how big their debt will be," says Snowden. "They don't leave on those trips expecting to go \$7,000 in debt, but then they do."

And younger Americans are struggling to pay these debts off. The rate of credit card delinquencies has risen significantly for Americans in their 20s and 30s, surpassing pre-pandemic rates, according to a 2023 report from The Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Not so for older Americans, whose delinquency rates have remained relatively flat.

THE RISE OF BUY NOW, PAY LATER SERVICES

Another potential factor in costlier travel: the rise in popularity of "buy now, pay later" for travel expenses. These services split payments over installments, easing sticker shock for airfare and hotel stays while creating more debt by another name.

"Somebody doesn't sign up for Klarna just one time," says Snowden, citing a popular buy now, pay later service. "They'll do it for multiple purchases, so that debt will grow."

Buy now, pay later has proven especially attractive among younger consumers. A n August 2022 NerdWallet survey conducted by The Harris Poll found that 50% of millennials and 44% of Gen Z had used one of these services in the last 12 months, compared with 25% of Generation X and merely 14% of baby boomers.

Mounting debt and deferred payments could hit travelers hard, especially as layoffs increase and some economic forecasters predict a recession later in the year. And another \$1 trillion shoe could still drop: student loans.

STUDENT LOANS LOOM

The average student loan debt for borrowers ages 35-49 is \$43,280 and \$32,750 for the 25-34 age range, according to 2023 data from the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office. □

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24/7

U.N.'s weather agency: 2022 was nasty, deadly, costly and hot

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

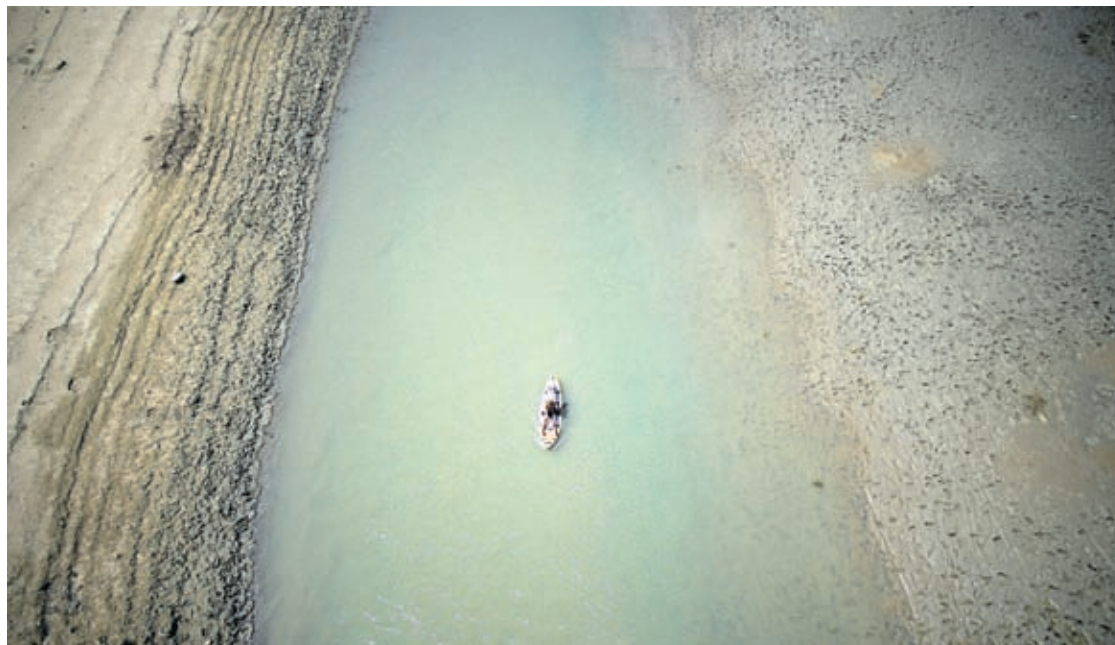
Looking back at 2022's weather with months of analysis, the World Meteorological Organization said last year really was as bad as it seemed when people were muddling through it. And about as bad as it gets until more warming kicks in. Killer floods, droughts and heat waves hit around the world, costing many billions of dollars. Global ocean heat and acidity levels hit record highs and Antarctic sea ice and European Alps glaciers reached record low amounts, according to the United Nations' climate agency's State of Global Climate 2022 report released Friday.

While levels have been higher before human civilization, global sea height and the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and methane in the air reached highest modern recorded amounts. The key glaciers that scientists use as a health check for the world shrank by more than 1.3 meters (51 inches) in just one year and for the first time in history no snow survived the summer melt season on Switzerland's glaciers, the report said.

Sea level is now rising at about double the rate it did in the 1990s, WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a news conference. Oceans can rise another half a meter to a meter (20 to 39 inches) by the end of century as more ice melts from ice sheets and glaciers and warmer water expands, he said.

"Unfortunately these negative trends in weather patterns and all of these parameters may continue until the 2060s" despite efforts to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases because of the pollution already spewed, Taalas said. "We have already lost this melting of this glaciers game and sea level rise game. So that's bad news."

Last year was close to but



A paddle boarder passes through a drying portion of the Verdon Gorge in southern France, Aug. 9, 2022.

not quite the hottest year on record, ranking fifth or sixth hottest depending on measuring techniques. But the past eight years are the hottest eight years on record globally. The world kept that warm despite the rare third year of a La Nina, a natural temporary cooling of parts of the Pacific Ocean that changes weather worldwide.

The United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and New Zealand had their hottest years on record. Global heat and other weather records go back to 1850.

"In 2022, continuous drought in East Africa, record breaking rainfall in Pakistan and record-breaking heat waves in China and Europe affected tens of millions, drove food insecurity, boosted mass migration, and cost billions of dollars in loss and damage," Taalas said. China's heat wave was its longest and most extensive in that country's record with its summer not just hottest on record but smashing the old record by more than 0.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit), the 55-page report said. Africa's drought displaced more than 1.7 million people

in Somalia and Ethiopia, while Pakistan's devastating flooding which put one-third of the nation under water at one point displaced about 8 million people, the report said. □

Associated Press



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Scherzer suspended 10 games for sticky substance ejection

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Mets pitcher Max Scherzer was suspended for 10 games by Major League Baseball on Thursday following his ejection for having a foreign substance on his hand during a game.

Scherzer initially appealed the suspension but dropped his appeal hours later. In exchange, his fine was reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000, according to a person familiar with negotiations between MLB and the players' union. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the agreement hadn't been announced.

Scherzer said shortly before New York's game at San Francisco that the Mets urged him to accept the suspension, adding that it was the best move for the team.

"I went through the appeal process. Looked at what that appeal process was going to look like. I thought I was going to get in front of a neutral arbitrator but I wasn't. It was going to be through MLB. Given that process I wasn't going to



New York Mets starting pitcher Max Scherzer (21) and manager Buck Showalter dispute a call from umpire Phil Cuzzi, center, and umpire Dan Bellino, right, after they found a problem with Scherzer's glove during the fourth inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles, Wednesday, April 19, 2023. Scherzer was ejected from the game.

Associated Press

come out on top," Scherzer said. "I'm going to follow what the Mets wanted me to do and that was to accept the suspension and come to a settlement." The appeal and suspension were imposed by Michael Hill, MLB's senior vice president for on-field operations. Scherzer became the third pitcher suspended

since the crackdown on sticky substances started in June 2021. Seattle's Héctor Santiago was penalized that June 28 and Arizona's Caleb Smith that Aug. 24, also 10-game penalties. All three inspections that led to suspensions involved umpire Phil Cuzzi. Scherzer, a three-time Cy

Young Award winner, was ejected on Wednesday during the fourth inning of a game at Dodger Stadium. He claimed the stickiness was caused by rosin and sweat and not by a foreign substance. Cuzzi determined after the second inning that Scherzer's hand was stickier and darker than normal and or-

dered Scherzer to wash his hand, which Scherzer said he did with alcohol while a Major League Baseball official watched.

After the third inning, Cuzzi then determined the pocket of Scherzer's glove was "sticky," likely with too much rosin, and he ordered Scherzer to change gloves. The umpires then checked the 38-year-old right-hander again before the fourth, and his hands were even worse than before.

Mets manager Buck Showalter described Scherzer's state of mind as good on Thursday and pointed out that the pitcher was at the front of the line when the team came off the field after Wednesday's game.

"He loved what his teammates did behind him," Showalter said. "He's a very competitive guy, but he also always wants to do what's best for the team." The manager said the aftermath of Scherzer's ejection wasn't unexpected, and called it "pretty much standard in history." He said a day earlier that he was comfortable with where the team is in the Scherzer incident, and explained what he meant. □

Celtics' Malcolm Brogdon wins NBA's 6th man of year award

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Celtics asked Malcolm Brogdon to learn a new role. He mastered it quickly. Brogdon was honored Thursday night as the NBA's sixth man of the year, after a season in which he came

off the bench exclusively and helped the Celtics finish with the second-best record in the NBA. It's the second major individual award of Brogdon's career: The 30-year-old guard was rookie of the

year in 2016-17. "This is such an honor. It has definitely been a transition for me, coming from Indiana to Boston," said Brogdon, who had started every game the past four years in the NBA before embracing his role to come off the bench when he was acquired by the Celtics. "My last two seasons, they weren't super successful, so for me that was another gut check for me in understanding that maybe I'm not a No. 1 guy but I can be a great No. 2, 3 or 4." Brogdon beat out fellow finalists Immanuel Quickley of New York and Bobby Portis of Milwaukee, receiving 60 of 100 first-place votes and 408 points overall from a media panel. Quickley was second at 326, getting

34 first-place votes. Portis had six first-place votes and 97 points. Brogdon averaged 14.9 points, 4.2 rebounds and 3.7 assists; among those who played primarily off the bench this season, only the Los Angeles Clippers' Russell Westbrook finished with better averages in those three categories. The Celtics sent a significant package five players and a first-round draft pick to Indiana last summer for Brogdon, with this specific off-the-bench role in mind even though he had started in each of his last 210 regular-season appearances. He played in 67 games for the Celtics, all off the bench. And he was still third on Boston in points per game, behind only All-NBA can-

didates Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown. When Brogdon made at least 50% of his shots from the field, the Celtics were 26-9 and 13-0 when he shot at least 63%.

"Coming to Boston and playing behind JT, behind JB, these guys are proven All-Stars and soon to be All-NBA guys," Brogdon said. "It's definitely a good fit for me." Sixth man was the fourth individual honor announced by the league so far this season, following the reveals of Memphis' Jaren Jackson Jr. as defensive player of the year, Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox as the inaugural winner of the clutch player award, and Kings coach Mike Brown as a unanimous pick for coach of the year. □



Boston Celtics' Malcolm Brogdon, center, chases down a loose ball in front of Atlanta Hawks' Trae Young (11), Bogdan Bogdanovic (13), and Jalen Johnson (1) in the first half during Game 1 in the first round of the NBA basketball playoffs, Saturday, April 15, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

NFL suspends 5 players for violating gambling policy

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

Three NFL players were suspended indefinitely Friday for betting on NFL games in the 2022 season, while two other players, including the 12th overall draft pick a year ago, received six-game suspensions for betting on non-NFL games at a league facility. Detroit Lions wide receiver Quin- tez Cephus, Lions safety C.J. Moore and Washington Commanders defensive end Shaka Toney are sidelined for the entire 2023 season and may petition for reinstatement afterward. Lions wide receivers Stanley Berryhill and Jameson Williams each received a six-game suspension, though they will be able to participate in all offseason and preseason activities, including preseason games. Their suspensions will start at the final roster cutdown.

The NFL said that a "league review uncovered no evidence indicating any inside information was used or that any game was compromised in any way." Gambling incidents have been relatively rare for the NFL. Most recently, wide receiver Calvin Ridley was suspended for the entire



Detroit Lions defensive back C.J. Moore (38), on special teams, reacts after running out of bounds on a fake punt during the second half of an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Rams Sunday, Oct. 24, 2021, in Inglewood, Calif.

2022 season for gambling on NFL games; he was later traded from Atlanta to Jacksonville and was reinstated. In November 2019, Arizona Cardinals cornerback Josh Shaw was suspended for gambling on an NFL game; he has not played in the league since. The Lions immediately released Cephus, who caught 37 passes in three seasons, and Moore, who

started one game in four years. Detroit executive vice president and general manager Brad Holmes said the two "exhibited decision making that is not consistent with our organizational values and violates league rules." Williams was the 12th overall pick in last year's draft but he played in just six games after returning from knee surgery. Alliance Sports, which rep-

resents Williams, said in a statement the player is "apologetic to the NFL, his teammates and the fans and city of Detroit." It also noted Williams' suspension was for a "technical rule regarding the actual location in which the online bet was placed — and which would otherwise be allowed by the NFL outside of the club's facility." Berryhill played in four games with-

Associated Press

out a catch in his only season. Holmes said the Lions will work with both Berryhill and Williams "to ensure they understand the severity of these violations and have clarity on the league rules moving forward." Toney started one game in two seasons with the Commanders, who said they have "cooperated fully with the NFL's investigation since receiving notice and support the league's findings and actions." With the rise of sports betting across the U.S., some pro teams have a sportsbook in their stadiums like the Washington Nationals (MLB) and the Phoenix Suns (NBA) as well as the NHL's Washington Capitals. Others, like the Arizona Cardinals, have a sportsbook on the grounds of the stadium and many fans bet on their phones while attending games. Sports betting ads also permeate breaks during NFL games. The NFL, along with other pro leagues, this week formed the Coalition for Responsible Sports Betting Advertising, a group described as a voluntary alliance to control how consumers see advertising and to rein in "excessive" advertising. □

RHP Pablo López, Minnesota Twins finalize deal for 2024-27

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Pablo López quickly felt at home with the Minnesota Twins. "By the time the trade happened, I heard from multiple people how good of a fit this would be, and I can't put into words how right that was," López said Friday after finalizing a contract that guarantees \$73.5 million over four seasons from 2024-27. Acquired from Miami in a January swap that sent American League batting champion and fan favorite Luis Arraez to the Marlins, López is 1-1 with a 1.73 ERA through four starts with 33 strikeouts in 26 innings and only 15 hits allowed. He is earning \$5.45 million this season in a one-year deal agreed to in January. His new agreement calls for

a \$1 million signing bonus, half payable within 60 days of the contract's approval by the commissioner's office and half payable Jan. 15. He gets an \$8 million salary in 2024 and \$21.5 million in each of the following three seasons. "When we traded for him and had that first phone call with him, the first words out of his mouth were, 'Thank you' and then it was 'I'm going to do everything I can every day to make the Minnesota Twins better and make my teammates better,'" Twins president of baseball operations Derek Falvey said. "I can't think of something that sums up Pablo López more than that statement, and I'm thrilled to be able to say today that he will

be here with us for a long time." In addition to the base salaries, López would earn a \$500,000 bonus for winning a Cy Young Award, \$250,000 for finishing second in the voting, \$150,000 for third and \$100,000 for fourth through sixth. López would get \$25,000 for All-Star election or selection, \$25,000 for a Gold Glove, \$100,000 for World Series MVP and \$50,000 for League Championship Series MVP. "Still feels surreal at times," López said, "but I'm just looking forward to every single day of my career here." The new deal for the 27-year-old gives the Twins additional long-term stability around a rotation that

has emerged as a strength. Sonny Gray, Kenta Maeda and Tyler Mahle are all in the final year of their contracts, eligible to become free agents in the fall.
















Their uncertain status for next season only underscored the team's interest in committing to López, who had a 3.94 ERA over 94 starts with the Marlins. □



Minnesota Twins starting pitcher Pablo Lopez (49) throws in the first inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees, Sunday, April 16, 2023, in New York.

Associated Press

Weekly SPECIALS

<p>WAS \$8.66</p>  <p>\$5.71 Per KG</p> <p>U.S. Porkloin Steaks</p>	<p>WAS \$3.29</p>  <p>\$2.34 Per Bag</p> <p>Onions Red 2lb</p>	<p>WAS \$3.99</p>  <p>\$3.42 Per KG</p> <p>Zucchini Green Med</p>	<p>WAS \$12.57</p>  <p>\$10.85 Per KG</p> <p>Brisket/Pecho</p>
<p>WAS \$3.97</p>  <p>\$3.48 Per KG</p> <p>Potatoes Oriental</p>	<p>WAS \$9.41</p>  <p>\$7.42 Per KG</p> <p>Chicken Cuts small</p>	<p>WAS \$2.62</p>  <p>\$2.34 Each</p> <p>Tomato Grape 1 Pint</p>	<p>WAS \$1.99</p>  <p>\$1.59 100GR</p> <p>Hard Salami</p>
<p>WAS \$5.65</p>  <p>\$5.08 Per Bag</p> <p>Minneola Tangerine 3lb</p>	<p>WAS \$1.84</p>  <p>\$1.65 Each</p> <p>Fan Nectar Guava 1L</p>	<p>WAS \$11.37</p>  <p>\$9.14 Each</p> <p>Nutella Large 750g</p>	<p>WAS \$2.51</p>  <p>\$2.28 Each</p> <p>Toufayan Sundried Tomato Basil Wrap 9in 11oz</p>
<p>WAS \$2.46</p>  <p>\$2.22 Each</p> <p>Kühne Kruidenazijn Salata 750gr</p>	<p>WAS \$1.54</p>  <p>\$1.32 Each</p> <p>Spice Classic Lemon & Pepper 3.75oz</p>	<p>DAIRY/FROZEN</p> <p>WAS \$7.71</p>  <p>\$5.94 Each</p> <p>Califa Farms 48oz Assorted</p>	<p>HBC/GM</p> <p>WAS \$2.28</p>  <p>\$2.11 Each</p> <p>EQ Isopropyl Rubbing Alcohol 70% 16oz</p>
<p>WAS \$15.01</p>  <p>\$13.71 Each</p> <p>Panamei Clam 17/22 Cooked 1lb</p>	<p>WAS \$2.45</p>  <p>\$2.45 Each</p> <p>Colgate Toothpaste Cavity Regular Flavor 4oz</p>	<p>WAS \$1.48</p>  <p>\$1.25 100 GR</p> <p>Provolone Cheese</p>	<p>WAS \$1.88</p>  <p>\$1.54 100 GR</p> <p>Mortadella W/Pistachio</p>
<p>DELI/BAKERY</p>	<p>DELI/BAKERY</p>	<p>DELI/BAKERY</p>	<p>DELI/BAKERY</p>

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